United Nations A/60/PV.56

General Assembly
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Official Records

56th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 29 November 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 75 (*continued*)

Oceans and the law of the sea

(a) Oceans and the law of the sea

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/60/63 and Add.1 and Add.2 and A/60/91)

Report of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at its sixth meeting (A/60/99)

Draft resolution (A/60/L.22)

(b) Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments

Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/189)

Draft resolution (A/60/L.23)

The President: I regret the confusion we experienced last night, which was due to technical problems. There was one remaining speaker, who was interrupted because of those problems.

I now call on the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before the voting. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and must be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Núñez de Odremán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation will present its explanation of vote on the two draft resolutions considered under the item "Oceans and the law of the sea", contained in documents A/60/L.22 and A/60/L.23, for which we require a reasonable period of time.

With regard to the content of draft resolution A/60/L.22, our delegation wishes to express once again the commitment of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to cooperate in the protection of the oceans and seas, particularly given its importance for sustainable development.

However, our country is not party to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, nor do the Convention's norms apply to it under customary international law, except those that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has recognized or will recognize in the future, specifically by incorporating them into domestic legislation. We wish to add that the reasons that have prevented our country from acceding to the Convention still persist. Therefore, our

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delegation, reaffirming its long-standing position on the Convention, will abstain in the voting that will take place shortly.

My delegation also wishes to reiterate, with respect to the draft resolution's fourth preambular paragraph, that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea does not have a universal or integral character and does not enjoy universal or integral participation. It is not universal because it has not achieved the participation of all States. Consequently, it is not applicable to States that are not contracting parties. The draft resolution acknowledges that situation in its section I, "Implementation of the Convention and related agreements and instruments", in which it calls upon States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention. Secondly, it does not have an integral character because it is not a consolidated document that considers all activities concerning the oceans and seas and related matters.

Our delegation also wishes to refer to the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (*A/60/63/Add.1*), elaborated in accordance with paragraph 74 of resolution 59/24.

We do not consider the statement made in paragraph 177 of the report to be acceptable where it refers to the Convention on the Law of the Sea as establishing the legal framework governing all activities that take place in the oceans and seas, particularly with regard to the protection and preservation of the marine environment and its living resources beyond national jurisdiction. The Convention does not have a specific regulatory regime on this matter. The report fails to mention the many regional and global agreements that regulate, within their own competencies, the protection and preservation of the marine environment and its living resources. Most important, it fails to mention the Convention on Biological Diversity, which is a framework instrument for regulating the conservation and use of biological diversity in all its aspects.

I now turn to draft resolution A/60/L.23, on the item "Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments."

Our delegation wishes to stress that a priority area for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is regulation of the fisheries sector and aquaculture, for which we have developed a broad set of legal-technical norms, contained in the law on fisheries and aquaculture. That enables us to carry out programmes to conserve, protect and manage marine biological resources in order to promote their responsible and sustainable use, taking into account the relevant biological, economic, food safety, social, cultural, environmental and commercial aspects.

The regulation of the fisheries sector also covers national fishing vessels. A control and inspection mechanism is in place for the activities of national fishing vessels on the high seas, using a system of reports to the body tasked with fishing management and the enforcement of the aforementioned law. Those reports make it possible to know the exact geographical location where fishing operations take place as well as to receive information on compliance with legal norms regulating the use of resources.

Measures taken by Venezuela to deal with illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing are implemented by means of periodic reports to regional fisheries management organizations on national fishing vessels fishing legally in international waters or in areas under the jurisdiction of other countries.

Our fisheries regulations mandate the use of global positioning satellite equipment on fishing vessels larger than 30 gross tons and the use of duly authorized on-board observers, who collect necessary information for the authorities. The fishery regulations also address fishing capacity and bottom trawling through a sanctions regime for non-compliance with conservation and management regulations.

We stress that the participation of citizens in fishing activities covered by relevant international laws is a principle addressed by our fishing and aquaculture regulations. The National Fisheries and Aquaculture Institute promotes the consultation and effective participation of people involved in fishing and aquaculture as individuals or as members of cooperatives or other organizations such as those of shipowners, processors, fisheries trade unions, industry, researchers, financial and educational organizations and of other qualified individuals

involved in the elaboration of plans for developing fisheries and aquaculture and related activities.

At the international level, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has implemented the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and chapter 18 of Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It has actively participated in the work of regional fisheries management organizations such as the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies, the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission, the Latin American Fisheries Development Organization, the Commission for Inland Fisheries of Latin America, the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

Venezuela is a contracting party to agreements such as the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and its Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife, the negotiations on which Venezuela participated from the start. Venezuela is also party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the Convention on Biological Diversity, which we consider to be the appropriate legal framework for regulating the conservation and the use of biological diversity in all its aspects. Venezuela has also signed bilateral fisheries agreements, including accords with Trinidad and Tobago and the Republic of Suriname.

However, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is not a party to the Convention on the Law of the Sea nor to the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments. Nor is it bound by the provisions of that Agreement under customary international law, save those provisions that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has expressly recognized, or will recognize in the future, by means of their incorporation into domestic legislation. The reasons that prevented their ratification persist today. Thus, my delegation is not in a position to support draft resolution A/60/L.23, on sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement.

My delegation will not block the consensus adoption of the draft resolution, in spite of the fact that it confirms a historic position with regard to the Convention on the Law of the Sea and related instruments, in the light of which, given certain aspects of the present draft resolution, we express our explicit reservations with respect to the draft resolution.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the vote. The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/60/L.22 and A/60/L.23.

We turn first to draft resolution A/60/L.22, entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea". The following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Belgium, Croatia, Fiji, Honduras, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Sweden and Uruguay.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and

the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen.

Against:

Turkey.

Abstaining:

Colombia, Ecuador, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Venezuela.

Draft resolution A/60/L.22 was adopted by 141 votes to 1, with 4 abstentions (resolution 60/30).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Fiji, Ghana, Haiti, Nepal and Vanuatu informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: We turn next to draft resolution A/60/L.23, entitled "Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments".

The following countries have been added to the list of sponsors: Belgium, Fiji, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Sweden and Uruguay.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/60/L.23?

Draft resolution A/60/L.23 was adopted (resolution 60/31).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote after the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes. They should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Llanos (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Chile has joined the consensus for the adoption of the draft resolution on sustainable fisheries, contained in A/60/L.23, with the following understanding.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea contains independent and comprehensive standards on high seas fishing that are fully valid in themselves. We have been able to join the consensus with respect to the 1995 Agreement of for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, better known as the New York Agreement. We have done so because, even though Chile is not a party to the Agreement, it agrees with the principles of the Agreement and applies them.

We believe that the principle of compatibility, clearly stated in the instruments cited in the resolution and international practice, should be fully complied with on the high seas by all high-seas fishing vessels and by each corresponding coastal State when that involves resources associated with and present in the marine area as well as in the respective exclusive economic zone.

Mr. Hart (Barbados): Barbados firmly supports the sentiments expressed in paragraph 46 of resolution A/60/L.22, which is virtually identical to paragraph 56 (o) of the World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). We particularly support the emphasis on dialogue among States on the development of international regulatory regimes to enhance safety, disclosure, liability, security and compensation in relation to the transport of radioactive materials through the regions of small island developing States. In voting in favour of the resolution, it is our understanding that the Secretary-General, in his report to the sixty-first session of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea, will report in a comprehensive manner on all issues contained in paragraph 46 of document A/60/L.22, concerning the shipment of nuclear and radioactive waste.

Barbados firmly rejects the argument, advanced by some, that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) are the only entities that should pronounce themselves on that issue. As our leaders acknowledged in the Mauritius Strategy for small island developing States, as well as in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the complexity of the issue requires much broader intergovernmental consideration of its various aspects. Barbados considers the General Assembly — the chief deliberative, policymaking, representative and

democratic organ of the United Nations — to be the only appropriate and legitimate forum to address the issue in all its many aspects.

It is a matter of great concern to Barbados that in attempting to justify those highly dangerous shipments, some have pointed to the safety record of such shipments. We cannot consider that a legitimate argument in the post-9/11 environment, where nothing is beyond the realm of possibility. In addition, should action be delayed to only after an accident or a terrorist attack on one of those shipments?

In conclusion, let me reiterate the position of Barbados on the issue, as contained in the Declaration of Panama, issued by the Association of Caribbean States at its fourth summit in July of this year. Heads of State or Government strenuously and forcefully rejected

> "the continued use of the Caribbean Sea for the shipment and trans-shipment of nuclear material and toxic waste, given the threat that any accidental or deliberately induced spill of these materials would represent to the life and ecosystem of the region".

The President: We have heard the last speaker explain their vote after the vote. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 75 and its sub-items (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 17

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Agenda item 73

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(e) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/224)

Draft resolution (A/60/L.27)

The President: Afghanistan continues to face serious threats and challenges, ranging from security development to humanitarian assistance. Assistance by the international community in peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and providing funds is essential. That support by the international community is of crucial importance.

The United Nations and specialized agencies will continue to play an important role in the post-Bonn process. In the political sphere, parliamentary and provincial council elections held on 18 September 2005 led to the completion of the Bonn process and demonstrated the broad commitment of Afghan voters towards a democratic future.

In the realm of development and reconstruction, Afghanistan will play the leading role in the reconstruction process, inter alia, by preparing an interim national development strategy. At the same time, funds will be needed, and there will be a conference in London in January next year to help that effort.

Concerning security, there have been successes, but more needs to be done. There is a continuing need for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as for the disbanding of illegal armed groups and for putting an end to the recruitment of child soldiers. The continued threat posed by terrorist groups has to be firmly addressed. In that context, I commend the Afghan National Army and Police, the International Security Assistance Force and the Operation Enduring Freedom coalition for their contributions in improving security conditions, including for the electoral process in Afghanistan.

With regard to the counter-narcotics effort and the fight against drug cultivation, as was stated in a report issued last week by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, progress has been made but more definitely needs to be achieved. The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, including the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons, remains critical. In that regard, the safety, security and free movement of all United Nations, development and humanitarian personnel have to be ensured. We should recall the actions taken by the Sixth Committee, also soon to be noted in this Hall, on the protection of personnel in peacebuilding situations.

In addition, ensuring the respect for human rights and protecting the role of women, including through participation in the political process and reform of the judicial sector, has to be a priority in the reconstruction process.

Finally, it is gratifying — I think we all agree — to reaffirm the importance of the United Nations in the mobilization of the international community to achieve development, security and respect for human rights in Afghanistan.

I now give the floor to the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolution A/60/L.27.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): As in previous years, I have the honour to introduce the General Assembly's annual draft resolution on Afghanistan. Let me say at the outset that Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, which will be presented later by the British presidency of the European Union.

Our debate almost coincides with the end of the Bonn process, that is, the "establishment of a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government", as it was defined in the Bonn Accord in December 2001 (*S/2001/1154*). The end of the Bonn process is a major step for Afghanistan and for the international community. We have come a long way since 2001.

When delegates met in the Petersberg near Bonn in 2001 their task was by no means easy: What was entitled the "Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions" was nothing less than the drawing up of a blueprint for a new order in Afghanistan.

After 23 years of war we were faced with a number of challenges, including a country with a physical and institutional infrastructure that was destroyed beyond belief. At peak times, over 7 million refugees were living under difficult conditions, mostly in neighbouring countries, burdening the social fabric of those populations. Children were without hope for a decent future in peace and prosperity and women were shut away behind closed doors. An elite had left the country, and there were ethnic minorities having no say in the shaping of their own country.

What have we achieved in the meantime? No doubt the Bonn process has suffered delays and setbacks. But, given the dire circumstances at the outset, we have done far better than could have been expected — and, indeed, was expected — by many in 2001.

Today, all the provisions of the Bonn Agreement have been implemented. The newly elected parliament is expected to convene for its opening session in mid-December. Furthermore, all the commissions have been established, as required by the Bonn Agreement. A new currency has been introduced. The process of demobilizing and disarming ex-combatants of the Afghan military forces was finalized under Japanese leadership this summer. The process of reshaping institutions such as the national army and police and of rebuilding the judicial, health and education system has started and is already showing results.

The security situation has improved in large parts of the country. Infrastructural and economic reconstruction has taken off. The situation of women has improved: girls are again going to school, college and university; women have increasing work opportunities, and there are now three female ministers in the Afghan Cabinet. Ten per cent of the candidates in the parliamentary and provincial council elections in September 2005 were women. A total of 27.4 per cent of the members of the Wolesi Jirga, the lower house of the Afghan parliament, are women — that is actually more than in many parliaments in Western countries.

The new parliament will be multi-ethnically balanced, as is the current Afghan Government. The central Government has extended its powers beyond Kabul. Trust in the future of Afghanistan has been restored, as demonstrated by the return of 3.5 million Afghan refugees since 2002. It is important, in our view, that Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, strengthen its efforts to create conditions to allow the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return and reintegration of additional Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons.

How have we achieved all of that? First, the Bonn Agreement set out a detailed agenda for the political process in Afghanistan, defining targets and concrete deadlines. Secondly, substantial United Nations involvement from the beginning that included coordination on the ground by the United Nations Mission of Assistance in Afghanistan proved crucial to the peace and reconstruction process. A strong United

Nations role will remain indispensable for the next stage, as well.

Thirdly, it was understood that the peace process would have a chance of being successful only if it was comprehensive. Reconstruction is not possible without security and an institutional network.

Fourthly, the security components were given different tasks. While it was cooperating closely wherever necessary, Operation Enduring Freedom was equipped with a robust mandate to effectively combat existing terrorist structures in Afghanistan, in cooperation with the Afghan National Army. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was meant to provide stabilization and assistance. Through its Provincial Reconstruction Teams, it has expanded into the northern and western regions, and it is currently expanding into the south of Afghanistan, ensuring security in cooperation with the central and local governments.

Fifthly, the substantial financial and institutional commitment of the international community has been essential in the cooperative effort to bring about change. The international community pledged $8.4 billion for the reconstruction of Afghanistan at the Berlin conference in April 2004. Thousands of troops from Operation Enduring Freedom and 9,500 ISAF troops played, and are continuing to play, a pivotal role in the security of the country.

Sixthly, a strong multilateral and multinational approach made effective peacebuilding possible. It was understood that no country or international organization alone would be able to bear the burden of and responsibility for the peace and reconstruction process in Afghanistan. That made close cooperation and coordination essential in order to avoid duplication. Today, many nations participate in Operation Enduring Freedom, and 36 contribute troops to ISAF. Five nations — the United States, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and Italy — have taken the lead in reforming the security sector in Afghanistan.

Last — but certainly not least — there is evident and decisive Afghan ownership. In addition to the support of the international community, the Afghan people, tired of war and misery, have defined and implemented all the steps taken in the Bonn Agreement.

What are the challenges and the way ahead? We have come a long way. Nevertheless, great challenges still lie ahead for Afghanistan. The security situation is still volatile, and the fight against terrorism has not been won yet. Ordinary criminality and corruption are on the rise. Local power holders — some closely linked to the drug trade — still maintain military power and political influence. The warlord or criminal backgrounds of some of the future members of parliament will have to be dealt with. Up to 1,800 illegal militias still exist, which represent tens of thousands of armed troops, now need to be demilitarized.

It goes without saying that Afghanistan must carry out the task in its own way. Local ownership is crucial for the sustainability and success of the process.

We believe that this year's draft resolution reflects the progress achieved, as well as the challenges lying ahead. The draft resolution focuses on security, on elections and on the beginning of the post-Bonn process, as well as on the production and trading of drugs. It considers humanitarian assistance, recovery and reconstruction. The unresolved issue of claims for land property is also addressed. With normalization progressing, we expect reconstruction to prevail over humanitarian concerns in the years to come.

The negotiations on the draft resolution have been swift and marked by a broad consensus among participants. Let me thank the delegation of Afghanistan for its constructive cooperation over recent weeks. Furthermore, the fact that these are more than 120 sponsors demonstrates the overall unanimity of the international community, as represented in the General Assembly, with regard to developments in Afghanistan. The draft resolution carries a strong message from this Hall to the Afghan people.

We have suggested changing the format of the draft resolution next year to reflect the new stage that Afghanistan is entering at the end of the Bonn process. It would be a single draft resolution, under one agenda item, covering the different aspects of security, reconstruction and governance, so far dealt with under parts A and B of the resolution. That suggestion has been welcomed by many delegations.

Afghanistan has the potential to be an excellent model for peacebuilding. Its example shows that military intervention should always be followed by active State-building. State-building and peacebuilding

in Afghanistan are also part of the process of addressing global challenges such as international terrorism.

Germany has long-standing ties with Afghanistan. We have contributed to the rebuilding of a stable and democratic Afghanistan since 2001 to a degree unmatched by our engagement elsewhere. The agenda for the reconstruction process was laid down by three international Afghanistan conferences in Germany, held in Bonn in 2001 and 2002 and in Berlin in 2004.

For the period from 2002 and until 2008, Germany has pledged €640 million — $760 million — in kind for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. We have tried to take a truly holistic approach to rebuilding the country — encompassing military, political, civilian, educational, cultural and economic development — because we firmly believe that a comprehensive approach is the key to success.

In the military sphere, Germany is the largest troop contributor to ISAF. In the area of security sector reform, we have taken the lead in international assistance aimed at building up, training and equipping a qualified and professional national police force, which includes the Afghan border police and an anti-narcotics police force. Since 2002, Germany has spent approximately €70 million on the reconstitution of the Afghan police.

Our commitment to reconstruction and peace in Afghanistan will continue under the new German Government. In the spirit of the Bonn process, we support the United Nations, the Government of Afghanistan and the United Kingdom in their preparation for the London conference in January 2006. We look forward to a substantial outcome of that conference.

I should like to introduce an oral revision to the draft resolution at this late stage. We would like to revise operative paragraph 5 of part B of the draft resolution. This revision was suggested by the delegation of France and has been supported by a number of interested delegations. It does not change the substance of the paragraph in any way; it is intended only to ensure full consistency with relevant international instruments on the protection of children in armed conflict.

The revised operative paragraph 5 of part B would read as follows:

> "Expresses its concern about the recruitment and use of child soldiers by illegal armed groups in Afghanistan, reiterates the importance of ending the use of children contrary to international law, and welcomes the accession by Afghanistan to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two optional protocols".

I hope that that revision will be acceptable to all Member States.

Before concluding, I should like to inform the Assembly that the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution since it was issued: Armenia, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Micronesia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Oman, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Saint Lucia, the Solomon Islands, the Sudan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Uruguay and Yemen.

We sincerely hope that this draft resolution will enjoy the consensus that it has always enjoyed in the General Assembly.

The President: The Secretariat has the text of the oral revision to draft resolution A/60/L.27, which is available to delegations.

Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan): We have gathered here today, one week prior to the fourth anniversary of the signing of the Bonn Agreement, on 5 December 2001. It is high time to evaluate the developments that have transpired in Afghanistan over the past four years and to assess the remaining challenges ahead of us.

Just two months ago, on 18 September 2005, millions of men and women, in defiance of all the threats posed by those aiming to derail the political process, went to the polls to elect their representatives to Afghanistan's national assembly and provincial councils. More than 5,000 Afghan men and women — in exercise of their democratic right — had nominated themselves as candidates. The significant role of women was clearly reflected throughout the electoral process, as they constituted a considerable number of the registered voters. Furthermore, 27 per cent of the

representatives to the national assembly will be women. Indeed, such a level of participation by women in the political life of Afghanistan is unprecedented. The first session of the newly elected parliament is scheduled to convene next month, marking a new chapter in Afghanistan's recent history.

The conclusion of the parliamentary and provincial elections is yet another major step towards the consolidation of democracy in Afghanistan, because it took place after the implementation of the following provisions of the Bonn Agreement: the convening of the emergency Loya Jirga in July 2002; the adoption of a new constitution in January 2004 safeguarding the fundamental freedoms and equal rights of all citizens; and the holding of the first-ever presidential elections on 9 October 2004.

As a result, we have now reached the end of the political agenda of the Bonn process. In that context, I would like to express, on behalf of my Government, sincere gratitude to the United Nations, to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, to the Coalition forces and to other international partners for their solid commitment and support.

Since the adoption of last year's General Assembly resolution 59/112A-B, on Afghanistan, we have made additional gains in various areas. Substantial progress continues to take place towards the formation of our national army and police. We are on track to achieve a standing professional army of 43,000 soldiers by the end of 2007. The Afghan national army continues to conduct joint military operations with coalition forces against members of Al-Qaida and the Taliban in the south and south-east of the country. Furthermore, approximately 30,000 national police officers are working to improve the security situation throughout the country.

We are now in the final phase of the completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process, as approximately 60,000 former combatants have been disarmed and demobilized. However, the successful achievement of the DDR process demands the implementation of all three phases of the process. As we have succeeded in completing the first two phases, the final component of the process, namely the reintegration of ex-combatants, must be addressed with the same degree of attention accorded to the first two phases. We have also made advances in the disbandment of illegal armed groups, in line with the programme to that effect.

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan continues to enhance the protection and promotion of human rights throughout the country. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission has further expanded its activities to various parts of Afghanistan.

Moreover, the number of children returning to school has increased from 4 million to approximately 5 million since last year. Likewise, the number of refugees returning from neighbouring countries has also increased significantly, indicating that relative peace and stability prevail in most parts of the country.

Despite the fact that the final provision of the Bonn Agreement has been implemented, many challenges remain in Afghanistan. The lack of security in parts of the south and south-east of Afghanistan — resulting from the renewed activities of the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups — is considered to be the main challenge to the stability and development of Afghanistan. That concern is rightly reflected in paragraph 11 of the draft resolution on Afghanistan that is currently before the Assembly and in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan dated 12 August 2005 (*A/60/334*).

In that context, we would like to welcome once again the adoption of Security Council resolution 1623 (2005) of 13 September 2005 in which the Council renewed the mandate of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan until October 2006.

The recent terrorist attacks in Afghanistan underscore the continued threat posed by international terrorism to the peace, stability and reconstruction of the country. My Government reaffirms its steadfast commitment to combat that scourge in all its forms and manifestations. In this context, let me reiterate that success in the combat against terrorism in Afghanistan demands the sincere commitment of the countries of the region.

The cultivation, production and trafficking of narcotic drugs is another impediment to the consolidation of peace, stability and development in Afghanistan. In that regard, my Government has taken significant steps aimed at the elimination of that scourge. The establishment of a counter-narcotics Ministry; the introduction of a comprehensive counter-

Narcotics Implementation Plan; the establishment of a Special Tribunal to prosecute those engaged in the illicit cultivation, production and trafficking of illicit drugs; and, finally, the creation of a Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund are but some of the initiatives taken by my Government to address the issue of narcotics.

We are pleased to have been able to achieve a 21 per cent reduction in opium poppy cultivation in the current year. We would also like to emphasize the importance of providing alternative livelihoods to farmers in order to reduce the incentive for the cultivation and production of opium. For its part, Afghanistan remains committed to exerting all efforts within its capacity to counter the production and trafficking of narcotics. On that note, let me emphasize that, due to the demand-driven nature of the illicit drug trade, additional steps are required on the part of transit and consuming countries to effectively curtail this trade. Afghanistan, definitively, will not be a narco-State.

Poverty, infant and maternal mortality, malnutrition and the lack of resources necessary to provide adequate health care are some of the other challenges facing the people of Afghanistan. In order to address those issues, the Government of Afghanistan has prepared the Afghan National Development Strategy. That strategy encompasses a clear approach to achieving sustainable poverty reduction and long-term economic and social development. Afghanistan's National Development Strategy will be officially presented at the donors conference on Afghanistan, scheduled to be convened in London by the end of January 2006. The sustained engagement of the international community in Afghanistan is crucial to achieving the objectives contained in the Afghan National Development Strategy.

My Government would like to emphasize the need to speed up the pace of the reconstruction and development of country, given the direct relationship between development and security. In that context, my delegation stresses the importance of continued international aid in a coordinated and sustained manner.

The successful conclusion of the Bonn Agreement should not mean the end of the international community's engagement in Afghanistan; rather, it should constitute the beginning of a new phase of international commitment. In that regard, the Afghan Government looks forward to the convening of the upcoming London conference on Afghanistan, at which the Government of Afghanistan and the international community will renew their partnership to build on the success of the Bonn Agreement during the post-Bonn process.

In achieving the remaining objectives, the post-Bonn engagement between Afghanistan and the international community should be guided by the following key principles: the leadership role of the Afghan Government in all aspects of the reconstruction process; the need for a just allocation of resources throughout the country; the need to ensure that international efforts serve to build lasting capacity and sustainable institutions; and finally, the need to ensure public transparency and accountability at all levels.

In conclusion, allow me to extend my delegation's sincere appreciation to the German delegation, in particular to His Excellency Ambassador Pleuger for his tireless efforts in preparing the draft resolution on Afghanistan before us. In addition, special thanks to Ms. Beate Mayder-Metcalf and Mr. Axel Kreuchle for having led the consultations with the delegations, resulting in the successful adoption of the resolution. We thank all delegations who contributed to the consultations.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Finally, let me seize this opportunity to also express my delegation's sincere gratitude to all Members that have co-sponsored the General Assembly resolution on Afghanistan.

Ms. Davis (United Kingdom): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Liechtenstein, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

Building on the success of the 2004 presidential elections, the 18 September parliamentary and provincial elections represent a significant achievement and important milestone for Afghanistan. They mark another step on the road to stability, security and prosperity for the Afghan people. The successful holding of those complex and challenging elections

was testimony to the hard work of many people and organizations, both Afghan and international.

On behalf of the European Union I would like to express our admiration for the Afghan people, who demonstrated their resolve by exercising their right to vote. I would also like to recognize the leading role played by the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in leading Afghanistan to where it is today. In doing so, I reiterate our gratitude to all the organizations involved in making the elections possible, including the Joint Electoral Management Body, UNAMA, the United Nations Development Programme and the Afghan and international security forces.

For its part, the European Union contributed considerably with its Election Observer Mission, as well as with the provision of technical support and over €60 million in financial assistance. We also welcome NATO's ongoing contribution to achieving security throughout the country. Many EU member States contribute to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force and run provincial reconstruction teams throughout the country.

While much has been achieved in Afghanistan, particularly over the last year, we must not be complacent. Many challenges lie ahead. The international community must maintain, and indeed strengthen, its sustainable engagement in Afghanistan to support Afghan ownership and enhance capacity-building in order to make a success of the next phase of reform.

The London conference, to be hosted by the United Kingdom, the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations at the end of January, will provide a platform to reiterate the international community's long-term commitment to Afghanistan's reconstruction. The conference aims to agree on a new compact between the Afghan Government and the international community, which will be based on Afghan ownership and will help deliver the kind of international donor support needed in the next phase of reform. The conference will also allow Afghanistan to set out its plans and priorities, as envisaged in the interim Afghanistan national development strategy.

The European Union's commitment to Afghanistan is outlined in the European Union-Afghanistan Joint Declaration signed in Strasbourg on 16 November. In that document, the EU welcomed the huge strides made by Afghanistan since the Bonn Agreement in 2001 and highlighted the leading roles of the EU and its member States in assisting Afghanistan in implementing its reconstruction plans, pledging a total of €3.1 billion in aid over the period from 2002 until 2006.

The Joint Declaration demonstrates our desire to build on the success of the Bonn Agreement and to establish shared priorities for the next phase in Afghanistan's reconstruction. It will now form the basis for strengthening the EU-Afghan partnership across a wide range of areas, including political and economic governance, security sector reform and justice sector reform, counter-narcotics, development, human rights, civil society and refugee return, education and culture.

Significant progress has also been made in security sector reform. Over 29,000 military and police personnel have been trained, and the Afghan army is now more professional, accountable and ethnically balanced. The EU reiterates the need for further progress in that sector.

On justice sector reform, progress has been made with respect to the adoption of essential legislation, training of personnel and the rehabilitation of physical infrastructure, including courts and correctional facilities. At the same time, improving the rule of law and consolidating a fair and impartial administration of justice remain crucial for the creation of a stable and peaceful Afghanistan and thus require sustained and coordinated action and investment.

The European Union also welcomes the progress made in the area of disarmament, demobilisation and rehabilitation (DDR), with over 60,000 men having entered the DDR process. However, significant challenges lie ahead as the focus now shifts to disarming illegal armed groups. The EU supports the new United Nations Government of Afghanistan programme, which is currently in its pilot phase.

The European Union continues to attach importance to the protection of human rights, with a particular focus on promoting women's and children's rights. The EU welcomes the ongoing efforts of the Afghan authorities in that regard. We remain concerned at continued reports of violence against women and girls and of trafficking in women and children, and we welcome the efforts of the Afghan authorities to address that issue. We also welcome the high

participation by women in the elections and the high representation of women in the new parliament.

The European Union congratulates President Karzai and the Government of Afghanistan on the significant achievement of a 21 per cent reduction in opium poppy cultivation, from 130,000 hectares in 2003-2004 to 104,000 hectares in 2004-2005. However, the trade in drugs remains the most significant challenge to the long-term stability, security, development and governance of Afghanistan. It also undermines the stability of the region and accounts for approximately 90 per cent of the heroin reaching the streets of Europe.

There remains a need to secure a sustained decrease in opium poppy cultivation, production and trafficking into 2006 and beyond. We therefore encourage the international community to work more closely with the Government of Afghanistan and Afghanistan's neighbours, including through the Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund, in support of the Afghan counter-narcotics strategy. The European Union looks forward to the publication of the Government of Afghanistan's national drug control strategy.

Allow me to conclude by stressing that the European Union remains committed to the long-term reconstruction of Afghanistan and pledges to work with the Afghan Government and international partners to build a prosperous, secure and sustainable Afghanistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): With the successful holding of parliamentary and provincial council elections in September, Afghanistan has passed the last major milestone in the Bonn political process. The forthcoming inauguration of the new Parliament, we hope, augurs Afghanistan's continued progress towards durable peace and stability.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are inextricably bound by history, culture, faith and mutual interdependence. The spirit of the relationship between our peoples was demonstrated by the generous and immediate assistance provided to us by brotherly Afghanistan in the wake of the tragic 8 October earthquake.

We commend our Afghan brethren for their steadfast commitment to peace, reconciliation and development. A peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan is in the best interests of Pakistan and, indeed, of the entire region. Peace will enable the safe and dignified return of the 3 million Afghan refugees still in Pakistan. Economic revival in Afghanistan will accelerate the already burgeoning trade and economic cooperation between our countries. Peace in Afghanistan will also open up the shortest transit routes for trade in energy, raw materials and goods between Central Asia, South Asia and the world, with enormous economic benefits for Afghanistan, Pakistan and all the countries of the region. Pakistan and Afghanistan are both members of the Economic Cooperation Organization. Earlier this month, Pakistan actively supported, and warmly welcomes, Afghanistan's entry as a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

The close bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are marked by the frequent exchange of high-level visits, progressive institutionalization and cooperation in diverse fields, and record levels of transit trade and bilateral trade. Pakistan is also actively participating in Afghanistan's reconstruction. During the visit of our Prime Minister to Kabul in July this year, additional assistance of $100 million was committed. Those funds will be utilized in consultation with and on projects identified by the Afghan Government. Of the $100 million pledged earlier by Pakistan at the Tokyo Conference, almost $50 million have been utilized for humanitarian assistance, projects in infrastructure, health, education and transport sectors, and the capacity-building of State institutions. Pakistan is also providing training to Afghan officials in several fields, including diplomacy, the judiciary, the police, counter-narcotics, agriculture, customs and banking. A brief overview of Pakistan's contribution to reconstruction in Afghanistan is being circulated with my statement.

Sustaining the progress made by Afghanistan over the past four years requires the continued support of the international community to overcome the remaining daunting challenges faced by Afghanistan — terrorist threats, narcotics, drug barons, warlords, illegal armed groups, the reintegration of the Afghan military forces, the development of institutions, the rule of law and justice sector reform, the fight against corruption, the promotion of national reconciliation, the safe and orderly return of Afghan refugees, human rights and, above all, economic and social development and reconstruction. The conference planned for early next year in London should reaffirm the international

community's support for the post-Bonn phase of nation-building in Afghanistan. The United Nations must continue to play a vital role in Afghanistan's stabilization and development.

Draft resolution A/60/L.27, under consideration today, presents a broad overview of the situation in Afghanistan. We thank the delegation of Germany for coordinating the formulation of the draft resolution, which was introduced by Ambassador Gunter Pleuger. Pakistan is a sponsor of the draft, which we hope will be adopted by consensus.

Insecurity remains a major challenge to Afghanistan's stabilization and reconstruction. We condemn the recent attacks in Afghanistan. The causes of insecurity are several and complex — terrorist and extremist elements, criminal activity and the illicit production and trafficking of drugs, besides the perennial problems of poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment. The Afghan Government must continue to receive the support of the International Security Assistance Force and the Operation Enduring Freedom coalition in building security. Pakistan supports the presence of international forces in Afghanistan, and their strengthening as necessary, until peace and stability are fully restored and a viable Afghan national army can assume full responsibility for the country's security.

For its part, Pakistan has mounted a determined campaign to eliminate Al-Qaida and Taliban elements on our side of the border and to prevent illegal cross-border movement. The Afghanistan-Pakistan-United States Tripartite Commission coordinates that cooperative campaign. We have deployed 75,000 troops and established 700 posts along the border. Another 4,000 troops were added for interdiction duties in the run-up to the Afghan parliamentary elections. We have also proposed the partial fencing of the border to minimize opportunities for illegal movement.

I should recall that Pakistan's operations have killed or captured over 700 Al-Qaida and Taliban terrorist elements. As a result of our efforts, Al-Qaida's command and control structure has been largely dismantled. Our forces have, unfortunately, suffered over 200 casualties in those operations. It is most disappointing, therefore, that those Pakistani efforts and sacrifices fail to find mention in the Secretary-General's report. May I note here that Pakistan's troop strength on the border with Afghanistan — 75,000 — far exceeds the combined strength of the national and international military presence within Afghanistan.

Narcotics remain a major and pervasive problem in Afghanistan. As a recent survey has shown, much more needs to be done to overcome that challenge to both security and development. Promoting alternative livelihoods is the key to moving away from a drugs-based economy. Considerably more assistance needs to reach farmers directly as a disincentive for poppy cultivation. Efforts are also required to reduce the demand for drugs in destination countries and to combat the illicit trafficking of precursors. To coordinate efforts for the interdiction of narcotics and precursor chemical flows, a counter-narcotics working group, comprising officials of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the coalition forces, has been established.

Pakistan continues to look forward to the voluntary return, in safety and honour, of the 3 million Afghan refugees whom we still host. We host them, I should mention, without any appreciable international assistance. Their orderly return and effective reintegration will contribute to the stability of Afghanistan and the region. Greater international assistance is needed in that context, including through the extension of the voluntary repatriation programme for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, which is sponsored by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees — a programme that is due to be terminated next March.

The figures from the census of Afghans living in Pakistan, which was held in February and March 2005, underscore the need for concerted efforts to increase Afghanistan's capacity to absorb returnees by introducing employment-generating reconstruction schemes and providing land and shelter, in addition to ensuring security. We support and appreciate the recent call by High Commissioner António Guterres to take the needs of the repatriating refugees into account in the development plans to be considered at the forthcoming London conference. The international community must also assist Pakistan in rehabilitation of the refugee-affected areas of Pakistan.

Success in Afghanistan will require a long-term commitment and a comprehensive strategy to address security, political, economic and social issues. As the Secretary-General observes in his report, even without the burden of violent insurgency, the reconstruction of

Afghanistan faces a truly formidable combination of challenges, including the pervasive drug economy and some of the lowest social and economic indicators in the world.

The discussion of the post-Bonn agenda provides a unique opportunity for a broad dialogue between Afghanistan and the international community. Pakistan stands ready to play its part in that process. We urge the international community to stay the course until durable peace and greater prosperity is achieved in Afghanistan.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): New Zealand is pleased to be a sponsor of the two draft resolutions on Afghanistan (*A/60/L.27, A and B*): "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security" and "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan".

New Zealand applauds the contribution that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and Member States have made in assisting in the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

New Zealand welcomes, and congratulates the people of Afghanistan on, the progress they have made in implementing the Bonn accord, in particular the successful holding of elections on 18 September.

Much has been achieved since 2001, although much remains to be done before Afghanistan can look forward with confidence to the future. New Zealand looks forward to participating in the conference on the post-Bonn process for Afghanistan, to be held in London next January, and to discussing the role of the international community in Afghanistan. We are a small country, but we will continue to play our part. New Zealand is committed to supporting the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to restore peace and security to the country and to make further progress on the economic and social development of all of the Afghan people.

New Zealand's contributions to Afghanistan since 2001 and its commitments to June 2006 exceed 110 million New Zealand dollars. Those contributions have taken the form of security assistance and development support. New Zealand forces have been deployed to the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamyan Province since September 2003.

New Zealand's development assistance is focused on projects or programmes carried out by non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies. We are supporting governance, human rights and sustainable rural livelihoods. We are also providing training for police in Bamyan Province.

In response to the need to address the production of opium in Afghanistan, we have recently contributed $500,000 to the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund. We hope that the Government of Afghanistan can help its farmers to reduce their economic reliance on poppy cultivation by ensuring security and enhancing local governance, along with the promotion of agricultural diversification and the improvement of access to alternative sustainable income-generating activities.

New Zealand encourages the Afghan Government to continue to address areas of human rights concern, in particular women's rights. The level of female participation in the September election represents a big success. Female candidates actively contested the 68 seats reserved for women in the lower house. The results showed that many would have been elected even without the quota system. The election has, we hope, consolidated women's participation in Afghanistan's political life. New Zealand continues to support the work of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.

The international community must maintain its commitment to Afghanistan, where President Karzai's Government continues to face significant challenges. Improving security outside Kabul will be a crucial element in bringing political stability to Afghanistan. It is in the interests of us all to assist in the restoration of Afghanistan — not only for the well-being of the Afghan people, but also because of the contribution that a stable and developing Afghanistan will be able to make to international peace and security.

Mr. Sen (India): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for having scheduled this important debate on Afghanistan, providing as it does an opportunity for Member States to engage on this critical issue in the General Assembly. We therefore welcome the opportunity to participate in this discussion under the relevant agenda items.

The pace of democratic change in Afghanistan has been remarkable by any standards. Afghanistan's successful achievement of democracy's milestones —

the historic election of its President, the entry into force of its first-ever constitution and, most recently, full democratic parliamentary elections — is testimony to the courage and conviction of its citizens and leaders.

It was only last week that confirmation of the final results of the parliamentary and provincial council elections was received, thus marking the successful conclusion of the Bonn process. We congratulate the people of Afghanistan on the successful holding of those elections, which constitute an important stage in Afghanistan's journey towards a peaceful, stable and prosperous society. That amply demonstrates, once again, the choice of the Afghan people for a non-violent and democratic way of life and Afghanistan's readiness to emerge as a democracy, with a commitment to individual rights, the rule of law an open society and an open polity.

India's support for a sovereign, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan was reiterated during the visit of the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Manmohan Singh, to Kabul in August 2005, when he conveyed India's readiness to continue contributing to the task of rebuilding Afghanistan, including through the strengthening of its democratic institutions. During his visit, the Prime Minister, together with Baba-e-Millat, former King Zahir Shah, laid the foundation stone of the building which would house the newly constituted parliament of Afghanistan. The parliament building is being constructed with Indian funding — a manifestation of India's commitment to democracy in Afghanistan.

As in previous years, India co-sponsored the General Assembly's draft resolution on Afghanistan. In our view, the draft resolution provides a balanced overview of the situation in Afghanistan. Among other things, it calls upon the Government of Afghanistan to continue to address the threat to the security and stability of Afghanistan posed by Al-Qaida operatives, the Taliban and other terrorist or extremist groups, as well as by criminal violence, in particular violence integral to the drug trade; endorses the key principles of cooperation between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community during the post-Bonn process, as set out in the Secretary-General's report; and welcomes the readiness of the Government of Afghanistan to prepare an interim national development strategy, to be considered at a conference in London planned for January 2006, where a new engagement between the international community and the Government of Afghanistan is also due to be completed.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank the delegation of Germany for having initiated and coordinated the draft resolution. We believe that the draft resolution performs an important function by highlighting the international community's assessment of the progress achieved in the political, security, economic, social and other critical spheres of Afghanistan's development and by drawing attention to the areas that require further attention. We have no objections to the plans of the coordinators of the draft resolution to merge its two parts, relating to peace and security and reconstruction and humanitarian issues, into one comprehensive draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan for the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

Just last week, on 23 November, Mr. M. R. Kutty, an employee of the Border Roads Organization of India, working on the construction of the Zaranj-Delaram road project in Afghanistan, was brutally murdered by his abductors. Mr. Kutty, along with three Afghan nationals, had been abducted on 19 November 2005 by the Taliban. We strongly condemn that inhuman and barbaric killing of an innocent person. The Taliban and its backers bear the responsibility for the consequences of that outrageous act. We hope that the perpetrators will be swiftly brought to justice. The Border Roads Organization of India is engaged in building a road in Afghanistan that is vital to its development and the welfare of its people. It is inconceivable that anybody should be opposed to it and threaten those working on it.

The recent escalation in violence, illustrated by the deaths of Mr. Kutty and other development and humanitarian personnel, underlines the continuing serious threat to Afghanistan's security and stability posed by remnants of Al-Qaida, Taliban and other terrorist and extremist elements. The report of the Secretary-General states that

> "Afghanistan today is suffering from a level of insecurity, especially in the south and parts of the east, not seen since the departure of the Taliban. The growing influence of non-Afghan elements in the security environment is of particular concern." (*A/60/224, para. 60*)

The Permanent Representative of Afghanistan rightly called that the main challenge to stability and development in Afghanistan.

There are clear signs that such elements continue to receive support and safe haven across the border from the southern and south-eastern provinces of Afghanistan. International responses to such destabilization are essential, but cannot be limited to combat operations on the ground. It is equally necessary to resolutely attack the financing, safe havens, training camps and networks that support them.

I may add that Afghanistan's historical tragedy was to be caught up in the great game in imperial times, which unfortunately continued, in different forms, through the cold war and then the struggle for the energy resources of Central Asia. Today, Afghan national consolidation is impeded by the collapse of the great game into a little game to dominate, again, the south and south-eastern edges of the chessboard. It is important therefore to ensure that international cooperation against Al-Qaida and the Taliban stays strategic and not be allowed to slip back into the temporary or the tactical.

The outcome document adopted by our heads of State and Government at the 2005 world summit calls upon States "to refrain from organizing, financing, encouraging, providing training for or otherwise supporting terrorist activities and to take appropriate measures to ensure that their territories are not used for such activities" (*resolution 60/1, para. 86*). The efficacy of cooperative multilateralism can, unfortunately, be tested only against the intentions of its weakest adherents.

India remains committed to the goal of a sovereign, stable, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan. Such an Afghanistan is necessary for peace, security and stability in the region. During the Prime Minister of India's recent visit to Afghanistan, he and President Hamid Karzai condemned global terrorism as a threat to democracy and declared that there could be no compromise with those who resort to terrorism. They reiterated their commitment to working together to ensure that Afghanistan would never again become a safe heaven for terrorism and extremism.

The *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, released earlier this month by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, registered a decrease in opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan for the first time since 2001, with the area devoted to drug crops declining by an impressive 21 per cent. The decline in cultivation is important and encouraging and was a result of the compliance of Afghanistan's farmers with the Government's anti-cultivation messages or eradication policy. Unfortunately, Afghanistan's share of opium production continues to remain high. In 2005, Afghanistan contributed roughly 87 per cent of the world total.

India remains deeply concerned by the cultivation, production and trafficking of narcotic drugs in Afghanistan, and its links with criminal and terrorist networks. That phenomenon can only serve to undermine the political and economic reconstruction of Afghanistan and has potentially dangerous repercussions for the region and beyond. In response to a request from the United Kingdom, which is the lead country for tackling the drug problem in Afghanistan, India has agreed to contribute to the recently established Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund. We have also communicated our agreement to take up a pilot project on community development to wean farmers away from poppy cultivation.

India and Afghanistan enjoy traditional bonds of friendship, a shared history, many common traditions and enduring cultural ties. In the last three years, our bilateral relations have reached a new level of intensity and cooperation. In partnership with the Afghan Government, we have been able to implement a significant programme of reconstruction assistance. India's present commitments add up to over $550 million since 2002, placing it among the top six contributors to Afghanistan's reconstruction — a significant effort for a non-traditional donor. India has undertaken, in partnership with the Afghan Government, projects in a wide range of sectors, including hydroelectric power, road construction, agriculture, industry, telecommunications, information and broadcasting, education and health, which were identified by the Afghan Government as priority areas for development. In the next phase of our assistance programme, we plan to focus on undertaking community based, small-scale development projects that have a short gestation period with a direct, rapid and visible impact on community life.

Underlying our cooperation with Afghanistan is our desire to see Afghanistan emerge as a strong, united, independent and prosperous country. We wish

to see the full consolidation of authority by the central Government. Our efforts in reconstruction and other sectors are directed at promoting unity and reconciliation. During his visit to Afghanistan, the Prime Minister of India stated:

> "It is a privilege for India to be a partner in the path that Afghanistan has chosen, so I come back with a great sense of satisfaction that our two countries are working hand in hand to accelerate the tempo of social and economic development and to strengthen the democratic foundations of the polity of Afghanistan."

For those delegations that may be interested, we have placed outside the Hall a brochure and CD-ROM entitled "Rebuilding Afghanistan — India at Work", providing an overview of India's assistance to Afghanistan.

Mr. Ozawa (Japan): Our deliberations on this agenda item are very timely, especially since the results of the parliamentary and provincial council elections held on 18 September have just been confirmed. The success of the elections is a reassuring sign that Afghanistan has passed the final and most important milestone in its post-conflict transition and the completion of the Bonn process — the inauguration of a new Parliament.

As the Security Council has stressed in its presidential statement of last Wednesday, this remarkable achievement is a clear demonstration that the people of Afghanistan are strongly committed to freedom and democracy, and Japan, as the lead member country in the Security Council discussions on Afghanistan, welcomes that clear demonstration of will.

The challenges that remain for Afghanistan, however, are still considerable. We would like to stress three points in that connection.

First, on the importance of ownership, with the completion of the Bonn process, Afghanistan will turn a new page in its history and begin its nation-building as an independent, democratic State. We believe that it will be critically important in that new phase that Afghanistan continue to tackle the wide range of challenges facing the State and its people with a stronger sense and spirit of ownership. We therefore particularly commend the effort that the Afghans have put into finalizing the national development strategy as evidence of their national ownership.

In stressing national ownership, we should note two points. First, it is important that the international assistance and support that is made available be provided in a manner that respects and encourages such Afghan-owned efforts and Afghan-led processes. In that respect, support directed at institution-building and human resource development is most needed and is critically important. Secondly, Afghan ownership should not mean, nor should it be used as an excuse for, reducing the level of international assistance to Afghanistan. Assistance needs for reconstruction continue to be urgent and great. In particular, as the Afghan authorities have emphasized — and we agree with their assessment — community-based development and basic infrastructure are important areas that should receive high priority in the consolidation of peace in Afghanistan.

Japan is strongly committed to continuing its work in assisting the reconstruction of Afghanistan in the coming phases, in partnership with the Afghan authorities and communities and with other members of the international donor community.

We wish to stress that an appropriate post-Bonn framework of cooperation is essential in order to make the international community's support for and assistance to Afghanistan both adequate and coherent. We appreciate, in that connection, the initiative taken by the Governments of Afghanistan and the United Kingdom in hosting the London conference scheduled for January next year. An important discussion is now taking place concerning an Afghanistan compact. The compact — which is the expected outcome of the conference — will deal with such key issues as security, governance, economic and social development and counter-narcotics efforts. A proposal for an appropriate aid monitoring and coordination mechanism is also being discussed.

Japan will continue to participate actively in those discussions to achieve agreement on an effective post-Bonn framework of cooperation that will contribute to the attainment of our shared objectives. At the same time, we encourage the international community to accelerate its part of the work to establish the benchmarks that will be integral to the compact.

My third point relates to security. Despite the successful parliamentary and provincial council elections in September, the security situation in Afghanistan continues to be a source of serious concern, as shown once again by the recent attacks against the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). There is a clear danger that continued insecurity will undermine the reconstruction and development process. The international community, therefore, must not reduce its commitment in the political and security fields after the completion of the Bonn process. Japan, for its part, has taken the steps necessary to ensure the continuation of the activities of the vessels of its Self-Defence Forces that are providing sea-based support for the Operation Enduring Freedom coalition, which, together with ISAF, is helping to improve security in Afghanistan.

We reiterate, however, our firm belief that primary responsibility for ensuring security lies with the Afghans, reflecting Afghan ownership. That will require determined effort on their part to advance security sector reform. As the lead nation in assisting the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in Afghanistan, Japan welcomes the completion of disarmament and demobilization there. We consider that feat to be one of the most successful and most comprehensive examples of such undertakings in recent post-conflict situations throughout the world.

Efforts clearly need to be redoubled, however, in the area of security sector reform. Such efforts should include the reintegration of disarmed soldiers, the strengthening of the Afghan security forces and the further disbanding of the illegal armed groups. In that connection, it is important to recognize that there is a link between the disbanding process and other efforts such as justice sector reform, counter-narcotics activities and community development. Needless to say, adequate coordination of efforts is needed in order to produce tangible results in this key area.

Finally, we wish to express our great appreciation to the delegation of Germany for submitting the draft resolution. It incorporates the thinking of my Government on the way forward for the post-Bonn process in Afghanistan. As a sponsor of the draft, we strongly support it.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): I am taking the floor briefly to express Iceland's continuing support for the rebuilding of Afghanistan. As in previous years, Iceland is a sponsor of the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security and on emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan.

Nearly four years after the signing of the historic Bonn Agreement, we have seen the conclusion of the political process envisaged in it. The parliamentary and provincial elections held on 18 September — the first in Afghanistan in more than 30 years — marked important steps on Afghanistan's road to recovery, peace and stability. We commend all parties involved for their role in organizing and securing the elections. We congratulate the people of Afghanistan on the confirmation of the final results and on the newly elected representatives who will take their seats in the House of the People next month. In particular, we would like to congratulate the Afghan women who have been elected. Full participation by Afghan women in every aspect of the political system — as well as in the civil, economic and social life of the country — must be a priority.

With international assistance, Afghanistan has made substantial progress towards stability. However, the democratic elections were held in a persistently unstable security environment. I agree with what the Ambassador of India said a few minutes ago about the grave security situation. We condemn attacks in Afghanistan against civilians and international staff that are intended to disrupt the democratic process. In that connection, we deplore the fact that Afghanistan has become more dependent on narcotics production and trafficking in drugs. Indeed, in the draft resolution before us, the General Assembly expresses its deep concerns about that development.

Iceland will continue to help the Afghan people — including through the International Security Assistance Force — in their reconstruction and their efforts to re-establish normalcy, in a manner compatible with requirements concerning the security of its civilian peacekeepers.

I agree with what the Ambassador of Japan just stated regarding the importance of Afghan national ownership. However, Afghanistan continues to need comprehensive and coordinated international support to enable it to take its place as a full member of the

international community. Iceland intends to continue to play its role in that respect.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Norway welcomes the successful holding of the parliamentary and provincial elections in Afghanistan. Another milestone has been passed. The institutional foundations of democracy are growing stronger. It is particularly encouraging to see the ethnic, ideological and professional diversity of the elected representatives, as well as the strong representation of women.

The long-term commitment of the international community to the further development of Afghanistan is still of vital importance. As the recent elections represented the last milestone in the Bonn process, it is now important to establish a solid framework for the work ahead. Norway looks forward to discussing the way forward with the Afghan authorities and the international community in London in January. The United Nations has played an important role in the Bonn process, and we hope that it will continue to do so in the next stage.

The fragile security situation still poses a threat to stability and development. Competent and efficient armed forces, police and judiciary are needed to meet the security challenge. Afghan ownership of those processes is essential. At the same time, the international community must continue to provide substantial support for security sector reform. Norway is increasing its assistance in the training of Afghan police officers under the German-led police project. We are also providing legal advice in the fight against the production of illegal drugs.

The security situation shows that the assistance of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is still needed. ISAF is expanding its area of operation. Norway's priorities are in close keeping with NATO's policy. We remain committed to maintaining a military presence in Afghanistan through our contribution to ISAF in Kabul and our leadership of the provincial reconstruction team in Meymaneh, in northern Afghanistan. We are increasing our contribution to ISAF, and at NATO's request we are now in the process of providing F-16 air support.

The illegal drug economy is also a great challenge. The Afghan Government, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, has taken important steps this year in reducing opium poppy cultivation. Norway appreciates the leadership that the United Kingdom has assumed in the fight against the drug economy in Afghanistan, and will continue to provide assistance in those efforts. We must take a multidimensional and coherent approach that promotes alternative livelihoods, law enforcement and information activities. Putting pressure on the poppy farmers in Afghanistan alone will not solve the problem. The less we alienate the Afghan population in the fight against drugs, the better. We must follow up our promises with regard to alternative livelihoods. Norway is increasing its support for counter-narcotic initiatives in Afghanistan. Combating the illegal drug economy should be a top priority for us all.

This year again, there have been a number of attacks on civilians, including United Nations humanitarian aid workers. The targeting of humanitarian personnel in a conflict is unacceptable. A concerted effort is needed to reverse a trend that runs counter to the most basic tenets of international humanitarian law.

Afghan ownership of development activity is vital. The priorities of development efforts, including those of the provincial reconstruction teams, must be aligned with those of the Afghan Government. Transparent planning and priority-setting should also take place at the local level. Local authorities must be empowered so that they are better able to provide basic services and long-term development. That is a matter of clarifying the provincial authorities' roles and responsibilities and of ensuring the necessary funding. When local democratic institutions with clear roles and responsibilities have been established and empowered to address the needs, the platform for development will be in place.

Afghanistan is facing a legacy of human rights violations committed over more than two decades of armed conflict. Justice, peace and democracy are not mutually exclusive objectives, but reinforcing imperatives. To build sustainable peace and stability, the people of Afghanistan have to come to terms with large-scale past abuses. There must be reconciliation between victims, perpetrators and other stakeholders. Therefore, a proper transitional justice strategy aimed at peacebuilding and reconciliation will need to extend far beyond the courts. A functional and unimpeachable juridical system is key. That may prove to be the most complex task of all. We applaud the efforts led by Italy in that regard.

Norway welcomes the progress made in the human rights field and the work of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. Both the Commission's report, entitled *A Call for Justice*, and the action plan Peace, Justice and Reconciliation in Afghanistan are important steps forward. The action plan acknowledges that any mechanism for building peace and justice must be carried out with the active and meaningful participation of all national stakeholders. Soon, a new human rights commission will be appointed. It is important to ensure that the appointment process be in line with the Paris Principles and that the future commission be independent, professional and efficient.

However, more remains to be done. The main responsibility for continuing the efforts to address human rights issues, including transitional justice, lies with the Government. Women must be allowed to participate in all aspects of the reconstruction and peacebuilding processes. The various provisions of the Constitution must be reflected in all legislation and judicial practice. Recent developments with regard to freedom of speech give cause for concern. Fundamental human rights must be a pillar upon which the Afghan justice system is built.

Afghanistan is one of the major recipients of Norwegian assistance and one of our partner countries in development cooperation. Norway is a strong supporter of joint financing mechanisms with a view to strengthening Afghan ownership and improving donor coordination. Afghan leadership can be achieved only by strengthening the Government, not by sidelining it.

We welcome the work being done by the Afghan authorities to prepare the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the Afghanistan Compact document. That work will form the basis for the discussions in London on the way forward for Afghanistan and future international assistance. We look forward to taking part in those discussions and to reiterating our strong commitment to Afghanistan. Our assistance to Afghanistan has a long-term perspective.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to extend our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his informative and comprehensive report and for his unwavering commitment, as well as for the central role that he and his Special Representative continue to play for the consolidation of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The holding of the parliamentary and provincial council elections on 18 September, which led to the completion of the Bonn process, was yet another occasion on which the Afghan people demonstrated their firm commitment to a stable and democratic future for their country.

The most recent report of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan highlights a number of promising improvements in the economic and social fields. Moreover, encouraging progress has been reported with regard to the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Afghanistan has also witnessed the development of its new professional national army and police. Those developments, coupled with the progress made in the creation of a new justice system and the adoption of the first report on the Millennium Development Goals by the Government of Afghanistan, are reasons to be confident that the country is moving in the right direction. They also indicate a growing ownership of the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts of the Government of Afghanistan, which needs to expand that national ownership to all fields of governance in the country.

Despite those impressive accomplishments, much remains to be done. The security situation in Afghanistan and the threat posed by opium production and drug trafficking continue to be of grave concern. Increased terrorist attacks and violence by Al-Qaida and the Taliban, coupled with a pervasive drug economy, have created alarming challenges that seriously undermine the security and thus hamper the reconstruction of the country.

The continuation of acts of violence and intimidation directed against development, humanitarian and United Nations personnel is another issue of grave concern which needs to be thoroughly tackled. The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns the continued heinous terrorist acts committed in Afghanistan and extends its full support to the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to improve the security situation in the country.

The cultivation and production of, and trafficking in, narcotic drugs in Afghanistan, which adversely affect the political and economic reconstruction of the country and undermine the stability and security of the larger region, especially neighbouring countries, continue unabated. Afghanistan remains the world's

largest supplier of opium, producing 87 per cent of the world's opium.

There are abundant reasons to believe that production of and trafficking in narcotic drugs underpin the other threats which contribute to the insecurity in Afghanistan, namely terrorism, organized crime and most other violent and criminal activities. Therefore, combating this problem should be high on the agenda of the Afghan Government and the international community in all efforts and initiatives to address the country's security and reconstruction challenges.

We have welcomed and firmly supported the valuable and sincere steps that the Afghan Government has thus far taken to contain the threat of narcotic drugs. Nevertheless, we concur with the Secretary-General that combating this menace will require long-term planning and a multifaceted strategy, developed by Afghanistan and implemented in close cooperation with the international community. We further believe that the countries with the widest military presence in Afghanistan have a special responsibility to prevent and counter this menace.

Moreover, while certain efforts by the Government of Afghanistan have resulted in the reduction of opium cultivation in some regions traditionally famous for opium production, opium cultivation has increased in the regions bordering my country, especially in the Farah province. As a matter of fact, despite our costly campaign, we have witnessed an increase in the drug trafficking in Iran emanating from Afghanistan over the past year.

We are of the view that the best way out of the situation created by this menace lies mostly in accelerating the pace of the Afghanistan's reconstruction in all fields, since opium cultivation has become a major source of income for many Afghan farmers. Accordingly, the international community should also redouble its efforts in providing assistance for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, for its part, is playing its role in that regard. Iran has been engaged in various infrastructure activities in Afghanistan, including in road construction, manpower training, electricity projects, humanitarian services and many other projects.

Furthermore, Iran has borne huge costs over the past three decades as a result of hosting almost 3 million Afghan refugees. We earnestly hope that the new conditions in Afghanistan will facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees to their home country in a more promising manner. We believe that the timely and full implementation of the trilateral agreement signed between Iran, Afghanistan and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as other respective arrangements, are imperative to help bring about a meaningful and dignified repatriation of Afghan refugees to their homeland. Iran stands ready to fully cooperate with the Government of Afghanistan and the international community towards reaching this objective.

The Afghan people and Government are now heading towards yet another major chapter in the history of their country, namely the post-Bonn process. The international community, with the United Nations at its forefront, should continue its support to the Government and people of Afghanistan in a coordinated manner, and my Government stands ready to provide its unreserved cooperation in that regard.

We welcome and support the key principles set out in the recent report of the Secretary-General for cooperation between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community during the post-Bonn process, including the leadership role of Afghanistan in the reconstruction process, the just allocation of domestic and international reconstruction resources across the country, regional cooperation, lasting capacity- and institution-building, combating corruption, promotion of transparency and accountability, public information and participation, and the continued central role of the United Nations.

We believe that combating narcotic drugs as well as the safe, orderly and voluntary return of refugees are two other key elements of equal importance which need to be incorporated.

I cannot conclude without reiterating the unwavering resolve of my country to continue to help the Afghan Government and people in their endeavours to overcome the daunting challenges ahead. In that context, my delegation has joined the sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/60/L.27.

Mr. Rock (Canada): Canada is pleased to have this opportunity to address the General Assembly on

the situation in Afghanistan and also to express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his most recent report.

The report duly acknowledges the significant progress that Afghanistan has made. It underlines the sound and productive partnership that has developed between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community, with the United Nations playing a central role. It also gives due credit to the people of Afghanistan, who time and again, throughout the last difficult years, have shown their courage, perhaps most recently by the simple act of casting their ballots in an election.

But the steady progress made to date is no grounds for complacency. Building the infrastructure of a State with the capacity to govern takes time, and all of us must redouble our efforts. Canada is committed to staying the course. We are very proud to work in partnership with the people of Afghanistan and its many allies. Canada's engagement in Afghanistan draws on resources and expertise from across the whole of our Government, with a particular focus on defence, diplomacy and development.

Canada is playing a significant role in southern Afghanistan. We have already established a multi-disciplinary Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar. In February 2006 — just two months from now — Canada will deploy a task force and brigade headquarters to Kandahar, bringing the number of Canadian personnel in southern Afghanistan to almost 2,000. Canadians are fully aware that these commitments are not made without considerable sacrifice. We were saddened just this past week at the death of one of our servicemen in Kandahar.

But we remain committed. The rebuilding of Afghanistan is now entering a new phase. It is time to consolidate our gains and chart the path ahead. In that context, permit me briefly to address two issues: first, the development and implementation of new benchmarks for progress; and, secondly, strengthening our commitment to the pursuit of justice.

On the first point, the Government of Afghanistan is itself leading the process of developing a new compact with the international community, setting out benchmarks and reciprocal commitments. Canada supports the development of that Afghanistan compact and the national development strategy as essential tools for ensuring forward momentum. We welcome the identification of security, governance and development as main themes of the agreement, with counter-narcotics being addressed as an issue that cuts across all the others.

We will be actively involved in the ongoing discussions in preparation for the London conference early next year at which the compact and the strategy will be launched.

Another important upcoming conference is the regional economic cooperation conference to be held in Kabul next month. Afghanistan's neighbours are obviously key to the country's future stability and prosperity. We encourage Afghanistan's regional partners to participate fully in the conference, to identify concrete areas in which to expand cooperation and to assume greater responsibility in promoting security.

(spoke in French)

My second point concerns our commitment to justice. We must all work together to ensure that those who want to destabilize Afghanistan, those who resort to violence to impede progress, those who are involved in illicit activities and those who do not respect human rights or who violate international humanitarian law — particularly by attacking aid workers — are dealt with appropriately. To that end, measures must be taken at several levels, utilizing not only the Afghan security forces, but also non-military means. That includes creating an effective justice structure and implementing a multifaceted strategy for transitional justice.

From that perspective, Canada supports the work being carried out by the Afghan authorities, in close cooperation with the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, to develop a national transitional justice strategy. We are pleased to note that the draft strategy envisages a broad spectrum of mechanisms for addressing past injustices, ranging from a detailed assessment of the civil service to the ending of impunity. It is clear that in Afghanistan, as elsewhere, justice is a precondition for lasting peace.

(spoke in English)

I should now like to say a final word about the United Nations, which plays a central role in consolidating a sustainable peace in Afghanistan. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan must be endowed with the requisite capacity and

support to carry out its mandate in a complex, evolving environment. That includes ensuring that resources are in place to support the post-Bonn Afghanistan compact and national development strategy, including monitoring and coordination efforts. Canada stands ready to assist in any way it can. We look forward to the upcoming discussion in London.

I close by reaffirming the strong commitment of Canada and its people to a prosperous and stable future for Afghanistan.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I make this statement on behalf of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). As a close neighbour of the SCO, Afghanistan enjoys friendly relations with SCO members. Changes and evolution in the Afghan situation are closely related to the region in which the SCO is located.

SCO members have been closely following the process of peace and reconstruction in Afghanistan, and we are pleased to see that positive progress has been made in that process. Politically, Afghanistan has promulgated a new constitution and has held successful presidential and parliamentary elections, laying a political foundation for its stability. Economically, the country is committed to post-war reconstruction, effectively using international assistance and tapping its own resources. Last year, it achieved an impressive economic growth rate of 20 per cent. In the security area, the Afghan National Army and police forces are smoothly being established. They have started to assume local security responsibilities independently and have also made important efforts to fight terrorism and narcotics. In the area of foreign relations, Afghanistan has successfully completed the Bonn process by seeking international cooperation. It also attaches importance to developing friendly relations and cooperation with its neighbours. SCO members would like to congratulate the Afghan Government and people on those achievements.

On the other hand, Afghanistan is still facing quite a number of pressing problems. Its security situation is still not completely stable. Its economic reconstruction remains a long-term and arduous task. There is still no obvious improvement in the handling of such issues as narcotics production and trafficking. We are seriously concerned at the significant increase in the number of terrorist activities carried out by the Taliban and other extremists in recent months.

The SCO believes that if Afghanistan is to achieve lasting peace and order and comprehensive progress in social and economic efforts, it must first maintain stability and promote development. We hope for a stable Afghanistan that is free of terrorism, war, narcotics and poverty. National reconciliation will be crucial in the achievement of a long-term comprehensive settlement of the Afghan conflict.

Secondly, it is important that Afghanistan build a friendly and cooperative neighbouring environment and that it maintain friendly relations and cooperate extensively with its neighbours, within the framework of the Kabul Declaration on Good-Neighbourly Relations of 22 December 2002, for mutual benefit and win-win results.

Thirdly, it is essential that Afghanistan continue to seek support and assistance from the international community, led by the United Nations.

The SCO believes that peace, stability and development in Afghanistan serve not only the interests of the Afghan people, but also the common interests of all countries in the region and throughout the world. The international community should respect the State sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan, as well as the Afghan people's independent choice of their social system and mode of development, and should not interfere in their internal affairs, so as to create favourable external conditions for the social and economic development of the country. The international alliance against terrorism should cooperate closely with the Afghan Government, acting within the mandate of the Security Council and with the consent of the legitimate authorities of Afghanistan.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization supports the provision of extensive international humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people and has made important contributions to that end. For example, in 2002, the Chinese Government pledged an aid package worth $150 million to assist the Afghan Government in post-war reconstruction. The grants portion of the aid package will be fully delivered next year. In November 2002, China wrote off all the mature debts — totalling £9.607 million — owed to it by Afghanistan. The Russian Federation also provides assistance to Afghanistan through various channels. In particular, Russia's Ministry of Defence, during the period 2002-2005, provided Afghanistan with vehicles and other

military equipment worth a total of $200 million. Russia also delivers significant humanitarian assistance.

In the future, SCO members will continue to do what they can to provide Afghanistan with assistance and to encourage their business people to take an active part in the post-war reconstruction of Afghanistan. As stated in the Declaration of the SCO summit meeting held in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 5 July 2005, the SCO is prepared to engage in exchanges and cooperation with Afghanistan in areas of mutual interest.

In that context, it should be recalled that countering the production and proliferation of drugs remains one of the key elements in stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan. The most effective strategy would provide tight control over Afghanistan's borders with neighbouring countries by strengthening existing and establishing new anti-drug security zones.

In June 2004, President Karzai, head of the Afghan Interim Government, attended the SCO Tashkent Summit as an invited guest. It was decided at the Summit that an SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group should be established to enhance cooperation. Early this month in Beijing, the SCO and Afghanistan officially signed a protocol establishing the Contact Group. According to the protocol, the two sides will hold consultations on a regular basis to promote bilateral cooperation. That will create new and favourable conditions for effective cooperation between SCO members and Afghanistan.

We believe that the role played by the United Nations in Afghan affairs following the completion of the Bonn process should include, in particular, the coordination of the international community's peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts there. The specific structure of a future United Nations presence remains to be determined, but it must involve Afghans themselves and take into account the country's real needs. SCO members will make constructive contributions in the context of relevant efforts.

We are confident that, under the leadership of President Karzai and the Afghan Government, and with the unremitting efforts of the Afghan people and the vigorous assistance of the international community, Afghanistan will make even greater progress in economic reconstruction and social development. The SCO stands ready to participate actively in that process and will work tirelessly to that end.

We support the draft resolution on Afghanistan, which was prepared by a broad group of sponsors and drafted by Germany. Its adoption by consensus would help to enhance the concerted efforts of the international community in Afghanistan.

Mr. Al-Enezi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to express our gratitude and appreciation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his valuable report contained in document A/60/224, which reviews the recent United Nations activities in Afghanistan and examines in detail the efforts made by the Organization and its personnel in implementing the humanitarian missions entrusted to them under the relevant United Nations resolutions. We also welcome the efforts made by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Jean Arnault, in the context of the reconstruction of Afghanistan's infrastructure and the restoration of security and stability in the country.

The State of Kuwait would like to congratulate the Afghan people on the confirmation of the final results of the parliamentary and provincial council elections. The success of those elections is a testimony to the commitment of the Afghan voters to democracy and freedom in their country. The confirmation of the results paves the way for the investiture of a new parliament at the proper time and, consequently, for the conclusion of the Bonn political process.

The persistence of war for more than two decades has led to grave losses at all levels in Afghanistan. The wars led to the collapse of the financial and banking system and to the destruction of infrastructure for transportation, telecommunications, electricity, water, education and healthcare, as well as to the deterioration of the agricultural sector, which resulted in severe shortages in the basic food supply. The implementation of all of Afghanistan's reconstruction programmes is therefore of cardinal importance, as it will contribute to meeting the basic requirements for the return of refugees and displaced persons to their towns and villages. The implementation of those programmes would also strengthen efforts to restore security and stability in Afghanistan in particular and in the region in general.

Kuwait would like to emphasize the importance of ensuring that the international community remains highly motivated and committed to assisting Afghanistan as it confronts the remaining challenges,

especially acts of terrorism and other threats to its security, bringing perpetrators of such acts to justice. Kuwait also condemns categorically the most recent terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, notably those against the International Security Assistance Force. Kuwait expresses its condolences to the families of all of the victims of those attacks.

Kuwait would also like to stress the importance of rebuilding the Afghan armed forces, reforming the judicial institutions and suppressing all illicit armed groups with a view to enabling the Afghan Government to take control of the situation and to make progress in the political process. Kuwait also supports the Afghan Government's efforts to fight the illicit trade in narcotic drugs, and calls upon the international community to enhance and strengthen programmes for eradicating the planting and production of opium.

At the economic level, Kuwait has taken many steps to assist in restoring security and stability and the infrastructure in Afghanistan. The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development has granted a $30 million loan in accordance with the pledge made by Kuwait at the Tokyo donors conference. Half of that loan was used in the reconstruction of the highway linking Kandahar to Spin Buldak. The remaining $15 million went to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. Since 2000, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society has made cash donations exceeding $6.5 million. Various charitable associations and committees are also continuing to provide assistance.

In conclusion, Kuwait hopes that our international Organization will continue its efforts to provide assistance to the Afghan Government with a view to restoring peace and stability in Afghanistan. Such assistance would have a positive impact on regional environment and would help Afghanistan to resume its proper place in the international community.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): At the outset, my delegation congratulates the Government and the people of Afghanistan on the successful holding of parliamentary and provincial elections in September, which demonstrated their firm determination to achieve democracy, reconciliation and unity. We look forward to the establishment of the new parliament and the completion of the political process agreed upon in Bonn four years ago.

Alongside that political accomplishment, progress has been made in rebuilding Afghanistan's security sector. The disarmament and demobilization programmes have been completed, and the reintegration programme is being implemented vigorously. In addition, a great number of new national army soldiers and police officers have been trained. Also notable are the high economic growth rates in Afghanistan's urban centres over the past three and a half years.

Nevertheless, there are still many challenges to lasting stability and sustainable development. As is widely recognized, the two most important issues are security and drugs.

There is an urgent and critical need to ensure security in all parts of Afghanistan. In that regard, the Republic of Korea is deeply concerned about the recent deterioration of security in some areas of the country. There are still 1,800 illegal armed groups operating in Afghanistan, and violence has increased over the last several months. Furthermore, the insurgency has taken a more brutal turn of late, using more sophisticated weaponry, as seen in the recent suicide bombing attacks. In order to counter that trend and create a more secure environment, the ongoing reintegration programme must be accelerated, the remaining illegal armed groups must be disbanded, and the Afghan national army and police forces must be strengthened in both quality and quantity.

As for the issue of drugs, we welcome the counter-narcotics measures recently taken by Kabul, which helped to reduce opium cultivation this year. However, the large-scale production and trafficking of narcotic drugs remain a serious concern. We encourage the Afghan Government, in close cooperation with the international community, to step up its efforts to eradicate narcotics.

The successful elections in September and the conclusion of the Bonn process offer Afghanistan a historic opportunity for transition from decades of war and poverty to peace and prosperity. At this critical time, and considering the ongoing challenges that Afghanistan faces, the international community's engagement with the country needs to continue beyond the Bonn process. In that regard, we welcome the international conference on Afghanistan to be held in London early next year.

The Republic of Korea, having actively supported the stability and reconstruction of Afghanistan, is once again a sponsor of the draft resolution before us. Korea

has continued with its commitment, providing medical and reconstruction units to Afghanistan since 2002 and contributing $57 million since 2001 for emergency relief, reconstruction and support of the elections held in September. We would like to reaffirm our unwavering support for the Government and people of Afghanistan in their efforts to create a future full of hope and promise.

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): Indonesia is pleased to address the Assembly on the situation in Afghanistan, and my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on that very important matter.

The report provides us with a clear understanding of the political process in Afghanistan in general, particularly with reference to the implementation of the Bonn Agreement. On the whole, we are gratified that general progress is being made, although not at a uniform pace. While we note the progress made in the institution-building process at the central Government level, we recognize that some difficulties continue to be a challenge, particularly at the provincial and district levels.

Similarly, efforts to reform security sector institutions have yet to enjoy a reassuring degree of success. The security situation is particularly disturbing, with an increase in the sophistication of weapons used and in the type of attacks being carried out by insurgents and anti-Government elements in some parts of the country.

Other areas of critical concern include the cultivation of and trade in narcotics. That issue continues to imperil the establishment of the rule of law and effective governance in Afghanistan, despite the best efforts of the country's counter-narcotic authorities. We share the view that this menace must be brought under control in order to protect the fragile democratization and the success of State-building in Afghanistan.

Despite all that, we are pleased at the successful completion of various efforts that have been undertaken by the Afghan Government, such as the disarmament and demobilization components of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme; the progress of the Afghan national army, which was due to reach its target strength of 43,000 ahead of schedule by September 2007; the training of over 40,000 police officers and the proposed major police reform; and the work of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, which is reported to be having a significant positive impact on the protection and promotion of human rights in the country.

It is against that background that Afghanistan held general elections last September to choose a National Assembly and local councils for the country's 34 provinces. Only last week, the final results of the parliamentary and provincial council elections were confirmed. They pave the way for the timely inauguration of the new Parliament and the conclusion of Afghanistan's transitional political phase. In that regard, my delegation is pleased at the successful outcome of the election process and calls on the international community to remain engaged and committed to helping Afghanistan to address the remaining challenges in other areas.

While my delegation is gratified by the successful conclusions of the elections of the Wolesi Jirga, we look forward to the constitutional and prompt filling of positions in the house of elders, or Meshrano Jirga. We further look forward to the consultations to be initiated by the Secretary-General with the Government of Afghanistan and other relevant institutions towards determining the political way forward. In the interim, we call for continued cooperation and commitment by the international community in support of the Afghan Government and people.

In that context, Indonesia has become a sponsor of the draft resolution contained in document A/60/L.27, which we hope can be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Norzuhdy (Malaysia): My delegation is pleased to participate in this debate concerning Afghanistan. We wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Afghanistan, as contained in document A/60/224.

My delegation joins others in congratulating the Government of Afghanistan and the Afghan people on the remarkable progress they have achieved since the Bonn Agreement of December 2001. We commend the recent confirmation of the final results of the parliamentary and provincial council elections held on 18 September 2005, and regard it as paving the way towards the timely inauguration of the new Parliament and the conclusion of the Bonn political process. We believe that the successful completion of those

elections has demonstrated the broad commitment of Afghan voters to a democratic future for their country. We reiterate our appreciation to all those who contributed to the electoral process, especially to the Joint Electoral Management Body and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, for their dedication and valuable work, and to the international community, including neighbouring countries, for providing security assistance, funds, election personnel and observers. In that regard, Malaysia applauds the Afghan people for having taken those brave steps and calls on them to remain fully committed to rebuilding their country and to strengthening the foundation of a constitutional democracy. We urge them to reassume their rightful place in the community of nations.

While we applaud their achievements, Malaysia recognizes the urgent need to tackle the remaining challenges, including security, narcotics, strengthening the rule of law and justice sector reform, human rights and economic and social developments. My delegation is concerned that failure to effectively confront those challenges could undermine the newly created political institutions and present serious obstacles to the full recovery of Afghanistan.

In that respect, Malaysia calls on the international community to fully support the Government and people of Afghanistan, as they work to build on their achievements, to underpin their freedom and enhance their security, to complete the transition to the rule of law, to accelerate the pace and scope of human and economic development and to eliminate their dependence on the illicit drugs economy.

My delegation recognizes that the continued and sustained support of the international community is essential for the implementation of a robust development strategy that could benefit all Afghans in their endeavours to overcome the remaining challenges. In that context, Malaysia stands ready to cooperate and will continue to provide technical assistance and training programmes to Afghanistan under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Afghan people in their endeavours towards nation-building.

Malaysia notes with concern that the cultivation, sale and trafficking of illegal narcotics poses a significant threat not only to the long-term security and stability of Afghanistan, but also to its neighbouring countries and the world at large. It has been widely acknowledged that narcotics are a threat to national security, social stability and health, and could impact on governmental effectiveness. My delegation is concerned that, despite the efforts to address the problem, Afghanistan remains the largest opium producer in the world, providing nearly 87 per cent of the world's total supply.

Although the recent report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime noted some progress in cutting back opium poppy cultivation, Afghanistan risks becoming a narco-State. In that regard, my delegation endorses and supports the 2005 counter-narcotics implementation plan as the basis for making progress towards a drug-free Afghanistan.

We also endorse the efforts made by the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to end poppy cultivation, to build relevant judicial and police capacity and to provide sustainable alternative livelihoods for those engaged in poppy cultivation. We call on the international community to provide assistance in that regard.

As security remains essential for long-term reconstruction and development in Afghanistan, my delegation welcomes the progress made in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of militia forces, and recognizes the particular challenges associated with the disbandment of illegal armed groups in Afghanistan. Progress has been manifested in the improved political environment during the recent elections and the creation of the Afghan National Army, which ensures that military assets and weaponry are in the hands of the State and are to be used only in the protection of national sovereignty.

Although the elections themselves were largely peaceful, my delegation noted the large number of attacks on security forces and Afghan citizens in recent months. An ambush in Helmand province on 10 October killed 18 Afghan policemen. Earlier, four Afghan policemen were accidentally and mistakenly killed by troops of a particular country. Suicide bomb attacks were also on the rise. In early October an assault on a British embassy convoy near Kandahar wounded several people, while a suicide bomber drove into a Canadian army convoy a week earlier and killed one Afghan. In September, a man wearing a military uniform blew himself up near an army centre, killing nine people.

While we unequivocally condemned all such attacks in Afghanistan, including the attacks against the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and expressed our deepest sympathies and condolences to the victims, we also expressed our disgust and abhorrence over the video showing the burning of the remains of alleged Taliban fighters by troops of a particular country. Such controversy, including the alleged abuses of human rights of detainees, does not bode well for the efforts of the international community to assist the Government of Afghanistan to secure and stabilize the country.

My delegation endorses the key principles of cooperation between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community underlining the post-Bonn process, and as set out in the Secretary-General's report. We support the central and impartial role the United Nations plays towards the consolidation of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

While we welcome the readiness of the Government of Afghanistan to prepare an interim national development strategy, which is to be considered at a conference in London planned for January 2006, we wish to urge the international community to support that process and to contribute generously to Afghanistan's development effort. Such support will go a long way in achieving growth through rebuilding infrastructure, developing human and institutional capacity and supporting community-based development. That process will define our mutual commitment and will provide a framework by which we can measure that implementation over the coming years.

In our capacity as the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Malaysia wishes to emphasize and reiterate its commitment and the commitment of other NAM members towards Afghanistan's development, as reflected in the Final Document of the XIII NAM Summit in Kuala Lumpur in February 2003.

Afghanistan has made great strides in its efforts towards nation-building. However, more could be done in the area of reconstruction, and in particular in removing obstacles to private sector investment. In that regard, efforts by the United Nations, the international community and Afghanistan's neighbours need to be further enhanced. On that note, my delegation is pleased to join the other delegations in co-sponsoring the draft resolution on the important question that has been introduced by the Permanent Representative of Germany.

Mr. Southcott (Australia): Australia congratulates the Government of Afghanistan and the Afghan people on the achievements made since the Bonn Agreement of December 2001. Australia also warmly welcomes the democratic outcome of the September 2005 national and provincial elections and applauds the courage shown by all Afghans who took part, as candidates and as voters. It is particularly gratifying to see the large number of women candidates who were successful in gaining election as Members of Parliament, reportedly yielding one of the highest proportions of female parliamentarians in the world.

Australia and Afghanistan share warm relations and a long historical association. Afghan cameleers first came to Australia in the 1860s and were instrumental in opening up the vast, dry Australian interior for trans-continental trade and transport. Diplomatic relations were established in 1969 and recent waves of immigration show that Afghans are finding refuge in Australia from the violence that has wracked their recent history.

Almost a quarter of a century of conflict and civil war has undermined the state structure in Afghanistan and made it a breeding ground for instability and terrorism. Recent history has shown us that States weakened by conflict should not, and cannot, be considered a localized problem or one distant from our respective borders. In our common interest of international peace and security, the United Nations and its Member countries have a pivotal role to play in assisting with the construction of secure, stable and economically viable States.

Australia remains concerned about the damage done in Afghanistan by years of conflict. Particularly disturbing are the reports of a recent upswing in violence in the south of the country and indications that remnant Taliban and other extremist forces are reorganizing, as clearly indicated by the United Nations Secretary-General in his report to the Security Council on Afghanistan of 12 August 2005 (*A/60/224*). The report states that Afghanistan is suffering from a level of insecurity, particularly in the south and parts of the east, not seen since the departure of the Taliban. There has been an increase, between May 2004 and May 2005, in attacks on Afghan civilians and members

of the Afghan and international security forces, with the resulting increased rate of injury and loss of life.

The reconstruction effort is of vital importance for the people of Afghanistan and provides the vehicle by which the cycles of poverty, lawlessness and violence can be broken. We welcome the May 2005 Joint Declaration of the United States-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership, the Joint Declaration of an Enduring Relationship between the United Kingdom and Afghanistan; and the 16 November European Union-Afghanistan Joint Declaration: Committing to a new EU-Afghan Partnership, as important statements of long-term commitment of major partners.

Australia, too, has demonstrated its willingness to assist and is committed to the longer-term rebuilding of Afghanistan. For example, between 2001 and today, Australia has pledged a total of $110 million in development assistance to Afghanistan. Australia estimates that in 2005-2006 up to $26 million in assistance will be provided. Australian assistance focuses on vital areas of rebuilding: support for the return and reintegration of refugee and displaced Afghans, meeting humanitarian needs, and building capacity to manage a successful transition to a democratic Government. Priorities will include supporting delivery of essential services through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, and support to improve food security and rural livelihoods, health and education. Australia also supports the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission and the Independent Electoral Commission.

Australian military personnel served with distinction in Afghanistan in 2001-2002 as part of the first efforts to reintroduce democracy for the Afghan people. In July this year, Prime Minister John Howard announced that Australia would again provide military assistance, by sending a special operations task group to Afghanistan in September 2005 for a period of one year. The task group of 190 personnel is helping to improve security in Afghanistan. Importantly, this included contributing to the provision of a stable environment in which to hold Afghanistan's first parliamentary elections in over 30 years, on 18 September 2005. The Australian Government is currently considering the possible deployment in 2006 of up to 200 additional Australian Defence Force personnel as a contribution to a Provincial Reconstruction Team under the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force.

Australia remains concerned at the high levels and pervasiveness of opium production in Afghanistan. The sale of that illicit drug funds anti-Kabul forces, which presents a challenge to the central Government and poses a danger to the people. A stable and viable Afghanistan will not be possible until the vexed issue of opium production is addressed and this source of chronic instability, corruption and misery is removed from the fabric of Afghan life.

To overcome the many challenges still present, Afghanistan requires support from its immediate neighbours. Afghanistan is important to the stability of the regions in which it has a pivotal place: South and Central Asia, and the Middle East. We welcome the December 2002 Kabul Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations and are encouraged by the efforts of neighbouring States to work cooperatively with Afghanistan to solve the pressing domestic and transnational problems which threaten to further destabilize the country.

Afghanistan requires ongoing international support. We look to the London conference in January 2006 to provide the necessary planning frameworks, benchmarks and strategic direction for the future rebuilding of Afghanistan. It also provides the opportunity for the newly elected Afghan Government to clearly put forth its aspirations and ideas on behalf of all the Afghan people. Australia looks to play a constructive role in a new "Compact for Afghanistan" and remains committed to international efforts for the rebuilding of that country.

Australia will continue to support Afghanistan's transition from conflict to peace and democracy.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.